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NEW

FIVE MILES OFF:

OR,

THE FINGER POST;

A COMEDY,

IN THREE ACTS;

AS ACTED AT THE

THEATRE-ROYAL, HAY-MARKET.

WRITTEN BY T. DIBDIN,

AUTHOR OF

THE NEW and DOCTOR, BIRTH-DAY, WILL for the DEED, THIRTY THOUSAND, CABINET, ENGLISH FLEET, FAMILY QUARRELS, WHITE PLUME, VALENTINE and ORSON, IL BONDOCANI, SCHOOL for PREJUDICE, FIVE THOUSAND a YEAR, GUILTY or not GUILTY, ST. DAVID's DAY, NAVAL PILLAR, MOUTH of the NILE, HORSE and the WIDOW, &c. &c.

A NEW EDITION.

LONDON:

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY J. BARKER,

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[*Price* 2*s.*

1809.

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1809

PROLOGUE.

WRITTEN BY GEORGE COLMAN, ESQ.

Spoken by Mr. FAWCETT.

SOME Hypercritic cries, in ev'ry age,
"How rich the paſt, how poor the preſent Stage!"
So undertakers ſay, on corpſes fed,
"Ah! there's no man of value till he's dead!"
Some ſelf-made ARISTARCHUS ever ſits,
Like a Judge JEFFERIES, over modern wits,
Bullies upon the bench—his upright plan,
Firſt to *abuſe*, then *execute* the man.
Still thrives our Stage, ſtill ſeems there vigour in't;
For *you* ſmile here, while cynics ſcowl in print,
Plain proof, *you* think, whate'er our Stage may be,
Such critics *infinitely worſe than we!*
Yet far from us, one murmur to repeat,
When *Liberal Cenſure* fills the judgment ſeat,
We thank the hand that points, with gentle art,
The wholeſome lancet to ſome morbid part;
The butcher, with his hatchet, 'tis we hate,
Who kills, where able ſurgeons *amputate*.
If we give *trash*, as ſome few pertlings ſay,
Why flocks an audience nightly to the Play?
If we be found *immoral* in our ſcene,
What does the Law's reſtraint on Drama's mean?
To ſtate the firſt, they laugh at *you* alone—
To ſtate the laſt, is *libelling the Throne* *.
Truth is, when impulſe can be fairly roufed,
Smile, tear, or grin, by *you* our arts eſpouſed.
However pedants preach, you'll think thoſe fools,
Who laugh or cry by Ariſtotle's rules.
And, while a laugh or cry is to be had,
Authors and actors can't be *very* bad.
Oh! may this doctrine be allow'd to night,
And be a laugh—broad laugh—your chief delight!
Look not with eyes of critical diſdain,
But favour *one* who ſtrives to *entertain!*

* An Act of Parliament has veſted the power of licenſing and ſuppreſſing the repreſentation of Dramas in his Majeſty's Lord Chamberlain.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

'Squire Flail, - - - - - -	Mr. CHAPMAN.
Sordid, - - - - - - -	Mr. GROVE.
Kalendar, - - - - - - -	Mr. FAWCETT.
Edward, - - - - - - - -	Mr. RAE.
Luckleſs, - - - - - - -	Mr. DE CAMP.
Andrew, - - - - - - -	Mr. NOBLE.
Spriggins, - - - - - - -	Mr. MATHEWS.
O'Gimlet, - - - - - - -	Mr. DENMAN.
Flouriſh (*with a Song.*) - -	Mr. LISTON.
Black Bob, - - - - - - -	Mr. HATTON.
Dapper, - - - - - - - -	Mr. MENAGE.
Robert, - - - - - - - -	Mr. PARSLOE.
Thomas, - - - - - - - -	Mr. JOHNSTON.
Dick, - - - - - - - -	Mr. GOODWIN, Junr.
Mrs. Prue, - - - - - - -	Mrs. POWELL.
Mary Flail, - - - - - - -	Mrs. MATHEWS.
Jenny, - - - - - - - -	Mrs. GIBBS.
Laura Luckleſs (*with a Song*)	Miſs TYRER.

The circumſtance introduced in the following piece, of the building of a houſe in one night, is formed on a fact:--Hampſtead Heath is the ſpot, where a beautiful cottage, ſo conſtructed, is ſtill in being. The character of Spriggins, with his repetition of "*I have forty pounds a-year*," &c. is alſo copied from an exiſting original.

Five Miles off, or the Finger Poſt.

ACT I.

SCENE—*A Park Lodge—Sun-riſe.*

Enter EDWARD.

EDWARD.

WITH what exhilarating freſhneſs does the breath of morn enliven the ſurrounding landſcape, and how eagerly do the ſweets of nature ſeem to ſtart from their luxuriant beds, to hail the riſing ſun; 'tis thus the cheering blaze of proſperity gladdens all, except the wretched few, who, like myſelf, are doomed to wither in the ſhade of poverty! (*knocks at the lodge door.*) Who have I to blame? the man who *unjuſtly* ſuffers, has innate *virtue* to ſuſtain his fortitude, while I ——

Enter ANDREW *from the Lodge.*

Edw. Well, my old foſter-father!

And. My poor young maſter—and on *foot* too?

Edw. I have come hither in hopes—

And. Which won't help you on your way back—your ill-uſed father—

Edw. Mention him not—I ſcarcely have recovered the ſhock his death has given me.

And. It was a bad day for his tenants, a woeful hour for his ſervants.

Edw. Yet they were happy—they did not offend him; but *I* had not the legacy of a parting *bleſſing*, nor the conſolation of thinking I *deſerved* one.

And. As to what he left to others—well, well, Mr. Sordid, his rich ſteward may have a marble monument when *he* dies, and fine verſes on it too, but I ſaw upon your father's tomb-ſtone, ſomewhat that beats all the poetry I ever read.

Edw. His epitaph, already! am *I* the laſt to pay a tribute to his memory? From what hand *came* it?

And. From the *heart*, young maſter. His name was honoured with a poor man's tear! The old curate ſaid, that words may be cut deep in marble, and if ſuch marks as I ſaw, don't laſt *here* ſo long, it is becauſe they're gone to be read in a better place.

Edw. When his ſon dies, if truth inſcribe his epitaph, 'twill be the record of his follies. Has Sordid ſeiz'd on all?

And. All—there were bonds and mortgages, which no one dreamt of till your father died.

Edw. My father has been as much miſled as *I* have been, tho' *his* errors have been on the ſcore of friendſhip—*mine* of folly.

And. I hope you'll call old Sordid to account?

Edw. I'll to him inſtantly;—a ſhort viſit will ſuffice for what I'd ſettle with *him*—then for *one* interview elſewhere—and, after that, a muſquet, Andrew.

And. Sir!

Edw. Nay, do not fear—I have been my *own* enemy too long, and dare not turn my rage againſt myſelf, while England has a foe to vent it on.

[*Exit* EDWARD.

And. Poor lad! I know whoſe houſe he means to go to next, and *there* he'll find the doors ſhut againſt him. Ah, if he knew who a certain perſon was going to be married too, he'd———Bleſs my heart—Why, neighbour——

Enter SPRIGGINS, *with a Letter.*

Sprig. Not much of a neighbour, now—it's a long walk from our houſe to yours. I live with Maiſter Kalendar, the great ſtar-gazing gentleman, as gives his advice to all his neighbours, and makes all the cliſes of the moon—and, I have brought a letter—

And. From him?

Sprig. No, not from him.

And. Well, but for me?

Sprig. No, for young Mr. Edward Frankland, in caſe he ſhould call on you;—it be a ſecret who it comes from.

And. And who *does it* come from?

Sprig. Why that you been't to mention—nor you muſtn't tell him about ſome money in the inſide o't, for fear he ſhould find it out—I was to give it into his own hands, and as I is very particular, do you take it, and let him have it directly.

And. A pretty meſſenger—follow him—he's not two hundred yards off—he went that way—

Sprig. No, I can't ſtay,—got to go a great way home through the foreſt—I know you'll give it him —,becauſe I ſhould be aſhamed,—

And. Aſhamed!

Sprig. Why, you ſee a friend as don't chuſe to be known, has ſent him *money*, and two or three of us lads have made a ſort of a *deſcription* for him, and ſo have ſlipt ſome ſmall matters o' notes under the cover, becauſe if he knew we did it, he might be a little proud like, and wouldn't take it—he's been a bit wild, but we muſt help him for ſake of his poor father.

And. (*takes the letter*) Well, my good lad, when *you* come to be poor, you'll—

Sprig. Me poor! I've forty pounds a year o' my own, beſides wages.

And. Aye, but if you *ſhou'd* by any wonderful change of fortune, get rid of all your property, this money you have here given, will come back to you *three* times over.

Sprig. Indeed! Why then it's almoſt a pity to ſend it—for, if we only give away a trifle in hopes of getting more than lawful intereſt, *you* may call it good-nature, but *I* ſhou'd call it ſwindling.

And. Well, I'll give it him when he comes from old Sordid—you know old Sordid—

Sprig. I remember him when I was a boy, but I've never ſeen him ſince I left living hereabouts—he

turn'd my father out of a farm once—but—fare ye well—you'll give the letter.

And. If you doubt me, take it yourſelf.

Sprig. No—it hurts gentlefolks' feelings to give 'em money with your own hands, and, I ſuppoſe, that's what makes ſome on 'em ſo afear'd to affront poor folks in the ſame way. For my part, I never fret about trifles, and if ſo be as a man who cou'd afford it, were even to offer me a hundred pounds, I'd put up with it, ſooner than pick a quarrel with any body. [*Exit* SPRIGGINS.

And. Well ſaid, John Spriggins—the way thou haſt contrived thy preſent to the poor lad, adds to its value. Egad, I don't ſee why I ſhoud'nt take the ſame advantage of young maſter—I've ſaved a trifle in his father's ſervice. Go for a ſoldier! Why ſhou'd he be aſhamed to take the bounty of his friends—I'm ſure, if there was enough here to buy him a pair of colours, no enſign in the ſervice cou'd fight under a ſtandard more honourably purchaſed. [*Exit* ANDREW *into the lodge.*

SCENE—*A Room in the Houſe of* MR. SORDID.

Enter EDWARD *and* DAPPER.

Dap. Lud, Sir!

Edw. Nay, ſir, but in a caſe ſo material to my intereſts, I muſt and will be attended to.

Dap. But, dear me, ſir, where's the uſe of my attending to your declaration, when I can't put in an anſwer.

Edw. Then call Mr. Sordid—call your maſter—I'm determined to be heard.

Dap. You muſt have ſtrong lungs to make him hear you—he went to London yeſterday, and will be returnable in the evening, unleſs Mr. Flail, of Harveſt Hall, lodges a detainer and keeps him all night, for he is to call there in his way home.

Edw. I'll meet him there.

Dap. Better not, sir—he's as busy as the first day of term—he's going to see his son married to Miss Mary——

Edw. To whom, sir?

Dap. Miss Mary Flail, sir—as fine a young woman as ever appeared before the king himself, at Westminster.

Edw. His son! married to Mary Flail—to my Mary—I never heard he had a son.

Dap. Nor anybody else, till within these few days, nor do I believe, (speaking to the best of my knowledge) that the young gentleman is yet aware that he has a father.

Edw. Why has such a circumstance been secret?

Dap. Haven't received the necessary instructions to enable me to inform you, sir; all I know is, that master's gone to fetch the young gentleman, and I dare say their meeting will be as pleasant as the long vacation.

Edw. Then, it is not only to beggar *me*, but to enrich a rival, the old pirate has plundered our estate.

Dap. Not prepared at present to enter on his defence.

Edw. But, Mr. Flail can never be so unjust.

Enter THOMAS (*with a letter.*)

Tho. Mr. Dapper, here is a letter directed for—lord bless him, there he is himself—it's for your honour—(*gives it respectfully to* EDWARD.)

Dap. (*to* EDWARD.) Well, sir; you needn't fear to leave any message with me—I'm acquainted with most of Mr. Sordid's concerns

Edw. Are you acquainted with his *conscience?*

Dap. Out of my department, I'm his clerk, and manage his *law* concerns; as to conscience, that's quite another thing, and forms no part of our business—shew the gemman down. (*Exit* DAPPER.

Edw. Will you give me leave to open this firſt?

Tho. Surely, ſir, I wiſh it may bring good news—it comes from Mr. Flail's, ſir.

Edw. From Mary's father—'tis his writing.—

" *Young Man,*

" *Every body knows his own buſineſs* " *beſt, and its my duty to provide well for my daughter,* " *If you hadn't loſt your fortune through your own fault,* " *I might have made ſome allowance, but now, no offence,* " *I hope, if the girl marries ſomebody elſe—being all, at* " *preſent, from your's,*

" FIREBRAND FLAIL."

" *P. S. I bear no malice, and when Mary's mar-* " *ried, ſhall be glad to ſee you at Harveſt Hall. You're* " *a choice fellow at hunting—and if any body ſays he* " *ſings a better ſong, I'm no judge—that's all.*"

The die is caſt then—and the manſion of my father is preparing to receive my rival, in poſſeſſion of my home, my fortune, and my promis'd bride.

Tho. Never mind, ſir; they may take poſſeſſion of the houſe, and ſtich themſelves up at church, but there iſn't a cottager's wife will go to viſit them.

Edw. Deprived of my fortune, I meant to have voluntarily reſigned all claim to her—but even the merit of ſuch a ſacrifice is here denied me. Yet I will ſee her—*ſhe* has no ſhare in the unfeeling conduct of *her* father, and were *mine* yet living, even his anger would not doom me thus to ſuffer. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE—*A Landſcape—the Stage forming a point where four Roads are ſuppoſed to meet.*

Enter SORDID *and* SPRIGGINS.

Sor. Thank'ye friend, thank'ye—and ſo I was going the wrong road;

Sprig. You're right.

Sor. And pray, where does *that* path go to?

Sprig. No where, ſir—it do always ſtay where it is—but if you go this way—

Sor. I ſhall come to Farmer Flail's?

Sprig. No, sir, not to Farmer Flail's.

Sor. No! why what a plague d'ye mean—I came *one* way—you bring me back from the *second*—you say the *third's* wrong, and the fourth won't do.

Sprig. No more it won't, sir.

Sor. If you'll allow me neither east, west, north, nor south, for horizontal progression, I must either sink or fly, and unless I get a balloon or a burying-ground, may stay here till doomsday.

Sprig. If you like it, Sir; but I'll be dang'd if any of those roads will take you to Farmer Flail's.

Sor. Is he dead, then?

Sprig. No, sir, but he have left off farming, and turn'd 'squire—he have got a pack of hounds and visitors—have filled his cellar full of French wine—bottled off his best ale—and brought his daughter home from boarding-school.

Sor. Indeed!

Sprig. Yes, she *was* a free-hearted girl, and ha' danced wi' I, at our hop-harvest—but now she moves French *minutes* as stately as a waggon o' wheat-straw, and cou'd no more milk one o' my cows, than I cou'd play upon one of her forty piarnos.

Sor. But, if her father's rich, his daughter *ought* to be instructed in all manner of modern accomplishments.

Sprig. So she shou'd, sir—but not in ways of wickedness and roguery. When I open'd a long book of her's, they pretend to call musick, I saw with my own eyes, it was to teach her the true art of *fingering*.

Sor. Blockhead! bumpkins shouldn't pretend to teach their betters. What's your name, friend?

Sprig. My name's John Spriggins, sir—I have forty pounds a-year, besides wages—and without offence, sir, who may you be?

Sor. Simon Sordid, Esquire.—You must have heard of me, or you're an ignoramus.

Sprig. Oh! this is Mr. Sordid (*aside.*)—Umph! yes, sir, I be ignoramus, sure enough; but I do

know my way out o' this place, without either a balloon or a burying-ground, and as you be so woundy clever, I dare lay you can find yourn.

Sor. Not without assistance—you promis'd to shew me.

Sprig. Yes, sir; but bumpkins shouldn't pretend to teach their betters—so I wish you a pleasant walk—here be only four roads to chuse, and if you take but one at a time, it's nineteen to nothing, but you'll find the right way without axing any body—(*going.*)

Sor. What an inhuman clod-hopper!

Sprig. (*returns*) I forgot to say, sir, that there's Gaffer Goreum's bull has a knack o' running at folks, and Black Bob, brother to him as hangs in chains yonder, do swear vengeance on all that pass this here way.

Sor. Any thing else?

Sprig. Only a fine dark cloud over head, and I ha talk'd myself too dry, to stand here and get wet for any body. [*Exit.*

Sor. A mad bull! a robbery! and a thunder-storm! Curse all cross roads and stage coachmen!—to leave me at the mercy of Black Bob and his brother—for here they certainly come, and one of 'em bringing the gibbet along with him. [*Exit.*

Enter FLOURISH *and* O'GIMLET, *carrying a Finger-post.*

O'Gim. There's a delightful direction-post, made by me, Mr. O'Gimlet.

Flou. And beautified by me, Solomon Flourish.

O'Gim. Which is to stand here, and point to four roads at once, like the picture of Three-finger'd Jack. Wait until I remove the stone turf that was over the hole I dug for it—there, *deliver* with it (*they fix it.*)

Flou. Verily, friend, it is already too low—the heads of the passengers will come bump against it,

and the fingers thereof will poke out the eyes of all who look thereon.

O'Gim. And hav'nt I made the top loofe, honey, that, if you tip it the leaft touch, it gets out of the way, before you can fay chips.

Flou. (*puts it round.*) Thou haft made it like unto a turnftile!

O'Gim. To be fure.—Would you have a poor tired foot paffenger on horfe-back, walk about a poft to read his way, when he may twirl it round as eafy as nothing, to which of the four roads he pleafes.

Flou. And from which every puff of wind will turn it, as it were a weathercock.

O'Gim. If your tongue wags about weathercocks, I'll put a fpoke in the wheel of it.—You're not at home, now, Mr. Flourifh, talking about the dearnefs of paint and provifions; you may look big among little children, and tread upon every beadle in the parifh; but you don't humbug Mr. O'Gimlet.

Flou. Thou art a ftupid mortal.

O'Gim. No more a mortal than yourfelf.—I was born in the family bed-room, my father made me his fore-man when I was a boy; gave me a hammer down upon the nail, and taught me the ufe of a faw, before I had cut my teeth.

Flou. Have I not alfo been a pains-taking man?

O'Gim. Yes, and a panes-breaking man too.—You're the village glazier, and crack bufhels of windows for the benefit of trade.

Flou. Have I not painted ev'ry fign in the village? Where haft thou feen a better dun-cow than I have made?

O'Gim. Guy of Warwick never kilt a dun-cow more completely;—I've feen you make a bull too; for when you was ax'd to paint the arms of man, you ftuck up the three legs.

Flou. Verily, friend, the parifh will not put up with this treatment of one of it's refpectable inhabitants.

O'Gim. A pariſh that puts up your ſigns, will put up any thing—ſo pay me on the ſpot for this job, or I'll let a few of your glaſs tricks be ſeen through, for the good of the corporation.—There, (*ſhews a long bill.*) there's a few *items* to begin with.

Flou. It ſhould begin with *imprimis*.

O'Gim. Oh, you'll put *priming* enough in your own bill, Mr. Painter.

Flou. (*reads.*) "*Item*, A large poſt—*item*, timber for ditto—*item*, ſcrews—*item*, three days and a quarter's work—and three hundred long nails."—Three hundred!

O'Gim. To be ſure—I cou'd'nt make the *fingers* without *nails*, you know honey.

Flou. "*Glue!*"—that article is charged more than the reſt, friend.

O'Gim. All owing to the high price of putty—I'm following your own example.—Jobs come ſo ſeldom that, if it wasn't for a bit of glue, things would never be able to ſtick together at all at all.

Flou. Well—make this thing faſt, (*turning it round*) or I'll not pay thee one farthing.

O'Gim. You may make it faſt yourſelf.

Flou. I have not the craft.

O'Gim. Oh, you've craft enough—ſo take it to your own houſe; and, if you don't make it *faſt* there, it will be the beſt uſed perſon in the family. [*Exit.*

Flou. It appertaineth not unto my buſineſs to ſet it right—he hath left it pointing to the paths of error; and I will bear witneſs againſt him, when the travellers he may lead aſtray, ſhall ſeek redreſs from the men of wigs and long ſuits, who are termed lawyers, who perplex us like the labyrinths of the little perſon called Cupid, into whoſe clutches I was once betrayed.

SONG.

Yes, I fell in the pit of love,
With a ti tum ti,
The ſpirit then began to move
With a ti tum ti,
Quoth I, "Fair maiden, ne'er deride,
For verily, when thou'rt my bride,
Lo, I will cleave unto thy ſide,
With a ti tum ti."

"Behold," ſaid Ruth, "there is a grove,
With a ti tum ti,
Where birds, call'd turtles, coo and love,"
With a ti tum ti,"
Lo! then I thought her truly mine;
But when of Love ſhe gave this ſign,
She prov'd a cruel Phi-lis-tine,
With a ti tum ti.
For ſhe another ſuitor had,
With a ti tum ti,
Prophanely call'd a flaſhy lad,
With a ti tum ti,
And when I reach'd the grove aſſign'd,
He came before I Ruth cou'd find,
And kick'd me ruth-leſs-ly behind,
With a toe tum ti.

[*Exit.*

Re-enter SORDID.

Sor. I've done it—I'm a wiſe man;—I have hid my money behind yon clump—there are certain bonds, mortgages, and ſecurities, too:—how came I by them? —no matter—I've as much right to 'em as a highwayman, and won't be robbed. A pretty journey I've had for nothing—can't find my ſon—ſo I have advertiſed him.—Had the rogue known he had a rich father, he'd not have run away.—What's here? Why they have put up a guide. (*reads.*) *To Harveſt Hall, 5 Miles.*—Oh, I can manage that pretty well.—

This poſt will point out the ſpot when I return for my treaſure in the morning. I've kept a trifle about me, in gold, ſilver, and paper, to prevent ill uſage; and, if I am robb'd, it ſhall only be of an odd-looking one pound note, a ſuſpicious ſeven ſhilling-piece, and a Brummagem ſixpence. [*Exit.*

Enter BLACK BOB (*in a great Coat*).

Black Bob. That man talk'd of money—I'll follow him.—What's this?—a road poſt?—I took it for ſomething elſe.—What a hard thing it is, a man can't begin his daily occupation, without being put in mind of what will be the end of it.

[*Exit after* SORDID.

Enter MARY FLAIL *and* JENNY.

Jen. Now dosey, miſs Mary, bleſſhe, dosey come on a bit vaſter; we ſhall never get ſafe home, and I be all over frightfulneſs and conſternation, for vear o'theſe vootpads and highway robberies, that do walk about all night, and there be put in the newspapers every morning.

Mary. There's no cauſe for fear, Jenny; and I muſt reſt a moment (*ſits on a Bank.*)

Jen. Now doan'tye go to ſtop, whatever ye do. If we be overtaken here by ſtrange men, there'll be deſpart work, I promiſe ee.

Mary. I hav'n't much to loſe, and ſhou'd make no reſiſtance.

Jen. No more hav'n't I, miſs, except this trifling token—and, if they offer'd to touch that, I be but a weak girl, but they ſhould have all the *aſſiſtance* I cou'd gi, I warrant 'em.

Mary. Is it a *love* token, Jenny?

Jen. I do hope it be, miſs—and I'm ſure you don't think there's any harm in love-tokens, or you wou'd never have ventured out ſo far without your father's knowing it, at this time o' night.

Mary. Perhaps you think me to blame, Jenny?

Jen. Not at all for that, miſs; to be ſure, when I were at home, I could'n't ſtir a foot without vather's leave; and as he never would give it me, I ſtaid at home like a dutiful child.

Mary. Could you never get an opportunity?

Jen. No, miſs, a poor cottage, like ours, had but one door to't—now, your father's, ſquire Phil's fine hall, ha' got ſo many, there's hardly finding the way in or out for 'em.

Mary. I was much happier before my father was ſo rich; and I liked the company of our honeſt neighbours, better than all the *gentlemen* who now pay court to us.

Jen. So did I, miſs. The young men of our village did uſe to do the beſt to entertain the young women at a fair or a feaſt; but *gentlemen* do ſend their ſweethearts away from table along wi' the cloth, that they may keep all the good things to a'ter dinner to themſelves, and yet your ſweetheart *was* a gentleman too.

Mary. And is ſo ſtill, by *birth*.—Imprudent Edward! how early in life to have effected his ruin!

Jen. He had better have ruin'd *any body* elſe!

Mary. If my father had not ſanctioned our meetings when *we* were poor, and Edward, the ſuppoſed heir to his father's wealth, I ſhou'dn't have venture'd this act of diſobedience.—I'm ſorry we didn't ſee him!

Jen. Never mind, miſs; my ſweetheart, John Spriggins, has given the letter, long afore this.

Mary. As it contained money, to ſpare his feelings, I didn't ſay from whom it came.

Jen. I was afraid o'that, miſs; and, thinking that, in all matters of true love and courtſhip, there ought never to be no deceit; and that nothing ought to be done that nobody ſhou'dn't be aſhamed on.—Why, I—I—thought——

Mary. (*with apprehenſion.*) You thought!—Well!—and——

Jen. I put in a bit of a note—which, as he knows I can't write, he'll never inſpect whence it came.

Mary. Worſe and worſe!—imprudent girl! who wrote it?

Jen. Nobody as knows its meaning—Couſin Remnant, the tailor, be a poet, and famous for what he do call his meaſures, and diſtiches, and hemſtiches—ſo I axd'n to write down only three lines, as I had made out o'my own head.

Mary. Three lines!

Jen. Yes—he ſaid three lines are call'd a *driblet*; ſo he wrote'n, and I ſlipp'd'n into the paper that had the blank notes in un.

Mary. Do you remember them?

Jen. Yes, miſs—

"When ſecret love does thus prevail,
"Remember, thereby hangs a tale—
"Your humble ſervant, Mary Flail."

Mary. Mary Flail!—why, you're a ridiculous!—I——my very name at the bottom, too!

Jen. No, miſs; I told un there muſt be no name at the *bottom*; ſo he put two lines a'ter that, (*a noiſe heard.*)

Mary. Hark! ſome one is making his way through the thicket. Come, Jenny, how can you loiter here; we ſhall be inſulted.

Jen. I told'ee how 'twou'd be, miſs; but there's no cauſe for fear, you know; ſo, pray, do ſtop, and hear the reſt of my couſin's poetry.

Mary. Nonſenſe!—we are follow'd—Come, girl, come. [*runs off.*

Jen. There, that comes o'fine talking.—When danger be at a diſtance, volks laugh at'n; for my part, I ha' got more courage than to run away at my own ſhadow. I dare ſay it is only a—(*going to look, immediately returns.*) Oh, miſs! ſtop for I! we ſhall be robb'd—we ſhall be kill'd—we ſhall be—Oh, dear, dear, dear, miſs Mary! [*Exit bawling.*

Re-enter BLACK BOB.

Black Bob. I thought I heard the ſquall of a woman.—I fear ſome one is poaching on my manor: it muſt be ſome *new* hand; for gemmen footpads of the old ſchool have too much honour to break into one another's walks.—Let's ſee, I made but a poor prize of that old traveller; and this unlucky great-coat may happen to betray me. I'll not venture to the village in it. The old man look'd plaguy hard at it. If he had been a *young* one, I'd have knock'd him down.—I'll leave the coat here (*throws it over the finger-poſt.*) I have taken one pound, ſeven ſhillings, and ſix-pence—for which I muſt leave my coat behind me. It's rather hard; and, if times don't alter for the better, I ſhall begin to think a man may as well live honeſtly, if it's only for the ſake of his own intereſt.

End of the Firſt Act.

ACT II.

SCENE—*Continued.*

Enter LUCKLESS (*ſhabbily genteel.*)

LUCKLESS.

I THOUGHT I ſaw ſome one to aſk the way of—(*takes out a newſpaper*)—let me ſee—(*reads*)—"If "Laurence Luckleſs, formerly of ——"—aye, my native place, ſure enough—"will apply to Fire-"brand Flail, Eſq. of Harveſt Hall, he will hear "of ſomething to his advantage." It's high time I ſhou'd—I've had my ſhare of diſadvantages—but, hang deſpair!—it's as ſhabby as my own appearance—I have juſt made my dinner and my toilet, by the road-ſide—bruſh'd up my beſt, yes, my very beſt coat—and want nothing but a ſhower of rain to

blacken my hat—and then to the Hall like a gentleman—*(going—sees the post with the coat on it)*—Eh! what the devil 's that?—a thief?—or a scarecrow?

Enter EDWARD.

Edw. Neither, my boy,—but an old friend who is equally glad and surpriſed to meet *you*.

Luck. If I wasn't afraid of making one of my uſual blunders, I'd ſwear, that of all other men in the world, you were my once merry companion, Edward.

Edw. You may ſwear it with a ſafe conſcience—I knew *you* at a diſtance, by your walk, which, like your ideas, is never in a ſtrait line; I cou'd not be miſtaken, though I had ſo little light to ſee you by.

Luck. (*looking at his dreſs*) Why, you have ſeen me in a better light than this, I confeſs, Ned—however, *you* are *very* little alter'd—you ſeem to be as ready to acknowledge a diſtreſs'd friend as ever you were.

Edw. Heaven forbid I ſhould be otherwiſe—but I ſhall be truly ſorry if *you* are diſtreſs'd; I hope you don't want much aſſiſtance?

Luck. Indeed! Why?

Edw. Becauſe, pſha! Becauſe it would not be in my power to afford it you.

Luck. No! The heir of a fine eſtate—the life and ſoul of all your acquaintance—favourite of the laſſes—envy of the lads—darling of the tenants—and beſt cricket player in Chriſtendom!

Edw. As the poet ſays—"I cannot but remember "ſuch things were, and were moſt dear to me;" but, now I am ruin'd—ruin'd by the artifices of my late father's ſteward, and who is now his ſole executor.

Luck. Well, but how?

Edw. Guilty of irregularities, which he in private abetted, I became ſo much his dependant for ſupport and ſecrecy, that he was, at length, enabled to alienate me from my father's affection.

Luck. But—in your father's dying moments—

Edw. I was artfully kept from him—was disinherited—but—damn the money—had I but seen my father—

Luck. Bear up, my boy, and wish with me, that some quick-claw'd devil may fly away with Old Sordid, wherever he is—may the spot prove the place of his punishment, and may his ill-gotten goods be transferred to the lawful owner as unexpectedly as he obtained them.

Edw. Rather let me blame my own want of confidence in a parent. If you wou'dn't laugh at my morality, I would say, happy is the child, who by acknowledging a *first* failing, avoids the necessity of a thousand more, to keep that one a secret.

Luck. For my part, I never knew a parent to confess *my* failings to—if I *had*, there 'd have been plenty to have acknowledged; but, I keep up my spirits, and though I was unlucky before I was born, I don't remember that I cried a bit the more for it.—Have you no money?

Edw. None that I can call my own.

Luck. Can't you borrow?

Edw. No, for I know not when I can repay.

Luck. Which is the very reason why some people *do* borrow.

Edw. It's not the loss of wealth that I regret, but the artful viper, in the person of his son, wou'd deprive me of my love.

Luck. *Has* he a son?

Edw. One never own'd till now. He is to marry the girl who—but I must hasten to return the contents of this letter, which her disinterested affection would have deceived me into accepting.

Luck. What, you *have* money then?

Edw. Yes, and it has been most curiously conveyed to me—but I have also pride—an honest pride, which, while I have youth and strength, forbids me to appropriate to my own use, the hard-earn'd sa-

vings of thoſe who may want them in their old age, or to profit by the artleſs attachment of an inexperienced female; but, come, accompany me to Harveſt Hall.

Luck. The very place I'm going to. I'll tell you a few of my adventures on the road, and, if what I am promiſed there to *my* advantage, can be thrown into *your* ſcale, you ſhall ſhare it, or take it all, and welcome. *(rain heard.)*

Edw. You're a generous lad;—let's ſee what way are we in? *(looking round.)*

Luck. In a way to be wet through if we don't make haſte.

Edw. Come along then *(going.)*

Luck. Not *that* path—look here, here 's a guide for the road, and a coat for the weather.

Edw. No matter for the guide—I know the road lies *here.*

Luck. Does it? why then the poſt *lies here*—for look—as for this coat—

Edw. Come—it has been hung to dry by ſome one.

Luck. Who will thank me for taking it out of the wet—I've been curs'd unlucky all my life, and never found a prize before. *(takes it down—ſcreams are heard.)*

Edw. The voices of women in danger!—follow me, friend. [*Exit.*

Luck. *(as he puts on the coat)* That I will—Why, Edward—Which road has he taken?—no matter—for when a female wants aſſiſtence, the devil take him who can't find the way without a finger-poſt.

[*Exit after* EDWARD.

SCENE—*A Hall at 'Squire* FLAIL'S.

Enter Mrs. PRUDENCE *and* FLAIL.

Mrs. Pru. It's to no purpoſe being angry, I tell you ſhe has gone out, Mr. Flail.

Flail. Gone out, couſin Prue? My daughter gone out, without my leave, or your company?

Mrs. Pru. Aye, cousin—and heaven knows where she is gone—nay, if I did n't scorn to carry tales, I cou'd tell you who's gone with her.

Flail. Not that spendthrift, Edward, I hope? If the hussey has dared——

Mrs. Pru. No, no; trust to my care for that; *Jane* has gone with her—the wench you have given her as own maid—own *maid* indeed, there was no such thing in the family, when I had the care of it.

Flail. It gets plaguy late,—I'll go look for her—I expect Old Sordid and his son every moment—I think they might have come a little earlier.

Kal. (speaks without.) Wind N. E. by North.

Mrs. Pru. Here's neighbour Kalendar.

Flail. With some of his impertinent advice, I suppose; I remember the fellow when he hadn't a shilling.

Mrs. Pru. Hush! or he may remember the same of you.

Flail. When he liv'd by making almanacks, and when you turn'd up your nose at him.

Mrs. Pru. Aye, he was *poor* then—but now—

Enter KALENDAR.

Kal. Here's alteration in the weather! ah! Mrs. Prue? How do, Prue?

Mrs. Pru. Prue! Sir, I am——

Kal. Rather frosty this evening—Old Firebrand, your fist; the barometer of fortune has risen with us both, but shou'dn't alter either of us.

Flail. No; you'll be a walking weather-glass as long as you live.

Kal. Better that than be a weather-cock, eh! Mrs. Prue! It's time the mercury in our veins shou'd stick at temperate.

Mrs. Pru. It may with *elderly* people, Mr. Kalendar; but I shall go and see if that thoughtless girl is return'd. O! Mr. K. for all your cold looks, there was a time when you little thought of change. [*Exit.*

Kal. Change? that was when I didn't a guinea; but, come, friend Flail, I want to counsel you—I fear you've had bad advisers.

Flail. Never took any advice but my own.

Kal. That's just what I mean.

Flail. Sir, I've money in my pocket—good tenants on my land—a fine girl of a daughter—and a delightful pack of hounds—then what do I want with advice.

Kal. To learn how to spend your money—manage your tenants—marry your daughter—and chase friends to go a hunting with.

Flail. Who's to teach me?

Kal. Vox Stellarum—study the stars—do you take in my new almanack?

Flail. Not I; I was a farmer twenty years, and never knew one right in my life; they always know when they should rain—and, if they promise sunshine, they make such thundering mistakes, that all the beer in the cellar gets sour'd by 'em.

Kal. There are times and seasons for all things; I come to speak of your daughter.

Flail. She shall marry whom I please; and what says your almanack to that, Old Weather-wise?

Kal. Why it says that girls should be transplanted from the garden of good education——

Flail. I gave ninety pounds a year.

Kal. To be grafted on some healthy stock——

Flail. Well, and don't I say——

Kal. While those, who from the hot beds of false refinement——

Flail. Whew! come down from your cabbage stalks, and don't compare my family to sprouts and parsley beds; be she girl, or be she garden-stuff, she marries the son of Old Sordid.

Kal. Which is wedding Virgo to Capricorn.

Flail. Now he's got out of the ground into the skies—didn't you say just now, there were seasons for ev'ry thing.

Kal. Truly!—in childhood, to get wiſdom and whipping—in youth, ſow wild oats—in manhood, marry, and meet with other misfortunes—in old age.—

Flail. We're too wiſe to miſs the tide, by looking at the moon.

Kal. That's a hit at my old trade;—never mind—I come of a family who—

Flail. Now for their whole chronology; I knew but two of your forefathers, and they—

Kal. Reſided here before I was born, which happen'd on New Year's day, one thouſand, ſeven hundred and fifty-five, ſixteen minutes, and a half paſt three in the morning, as per grandmother's gold watch, then lying on a claw table in a corner of the room.

Flail. Pha! I've heard that the firſt of your family came into this country—

Kal. Anno twelve hundred and fifty-two, at the very time when Roger Bacon invented the magic lanthorn.

Flail. Aye, they carried it about, I ſuppoſe, and taught their children the art of magnifying.

Kal. Sir, my anceſtors were never obliged to the family of the Flails, even for a thraſhing.

Flail. And as for yourſelf.

Kal. I was ſent to ſchool in the year ſixty-three—made prodigious progreſs in ev'ry thing they didn't wiſh me to learn—was 'prenticed to a ſpectacle grinder, in ſixty-nine, where I learn'd to make almanacks, and predicted every thing but my own good luck, till a diſtant relation came from abroad, with more money than health, who was ſo overjoy'd at my foreboding him a long life, that he died directly, and left me ev'ry ſhilling.

Flail. And now you give advice *gratis*.

Kal. I do, and wou'd have you give your daughter where you promiſed her—you've had your fortunate planet as well as me, and ſhou'd remember that liberality is a ſun-beam which ought never to be eclipſed by avarice.

Flail. Sir, I ſcorn to reflect on any body, but—

Kal. I know you do—and while you refuſe to ſhare with others, the light which is only reflected on yourſelf, your lucky ſtar will dwindle to a ruſh-light, and, when the extinguiſher of Old Time puts you out, you'll evaporate in ſmoke, old Firebrand.

Flail. Put me out, Sir! I'll put you—

Kal. Into any thing but a paſſion; look, yonder's your daughter, all agitation, like a pond before rain; —bleſs me! (*looking at his watch*) Venus and Jupiter are on the point of a conjunction; I'll juſt take an obſervation through the next room window, and be back in a twinkling.

Flail. Take care, leſt in making your obſervations, you make ſome of your uſual errors.

Kal. I underſtand you; you're always twitting me with experimental miſtakes—ſuch as flying electrical kites in a thunder-ſtorm—and giving ſuch a red hot focus to the ſchoolmaſter's ſpectacles, that they ſet his wig on fire—and what then? It's natural to make miſtakes in any art, and when the intention is not erroneous, he's a plaguy ill-natured fellow who won't make allowance for 'em. [*Exit.*

Flail. Let a parent act as honeſtly as he may, folks will blame him; I dare not wed my daughter to a ſpendthrift, nor will I force her to marry where ſhe has no liking; and, if Sordid's ſon ſhould not prove to be the man I take him for—perhaps—but I won't be talk'd out of my reaſon, for people never know the value of indulgence half ſo well, as when it comes from authority that knows how to make itſelf reſpected.

Enter MARY *and* EDWARD.

Mary. (*running to her father*) Ah! my dear father ſuch an eſcape! I owe my life, nay more, perhaps, to the gallantry of Edward.

Flail. Gallantry! hark'ye, Sir, if you have ſer-

ved my daughter, I thank you, and ſo we part friends. (*Leads Mary to the other ſide.*)

Mary. He ſav'd me from a ruffian, who—

Flail. How came you from home?

Mary. I was to blame to go without your knowledge—but—I—I meant no harm.

Flail. Perhaps not; but more miſchief comes of meaning no harm than you're aware of; go—and when I have thanked this young gentleman for his *gallantry* as you call it, I ſhall have a word or two for *your* ear; go, I ſay.

Mary. Sir, you ſhall command my duty and obedience; but, there is a ſentiment of gratitude, which that young man will ever have a right to.

[*Exit* MARY.

Edw. And one kind ſentiment from Mary will compenſate the cruelty of all the world.

Flail. And *my* cruelty among the reſt; I ſuppoſe you look on me as a flinty-hearted father—my daughter as fair game—and yourſelf as the only poacher who has a right to ſteal her from me.

Edw. You are miſtaken, Sir, I wou'd neither ſully her honour nor my own, by any action that wou'dn't bear the light. As the girl of my heart, I adore *her*—as her father, I reverence *you*—but for myſelf, I ſhou'd be a hypocrite were I to ſay otherwiſe than that, when I have juſt riſk'd my life in her defence, I think I am, at leaſt, entitled to good manners for my pains. (*going.*)

Flail. Good manners, Sir! I'm not to be taught good manners by any one, much leſs by a—— aye, Sir, you may look big, but—

Edw. Good day, Sir; uſe your daughter kindly; marry her to whom you pleaſe, but make her happy and I'll forgive you all.

Flail. I won't be forgiven—I never deſerved to be forgiven—I'll prove it in your caſe. I had a daughter, and you had a fortune; I have my daughter ſtill, have taken care of her improved her, and

made her worth her weight in gold, a good for nothing huſſey! while you—

Edw. Have acted with imprudence, loſt my fortune, and have been alternately, the dupe of others, and the enemy of myſelf.

Flail. Then how dare you talk of forgiving me. When you ſpeak reaſon, and know how to hold your tongue, I'll liſten to you; nay, more—as Old Sordid and his ſon haven't yet made their appearance according to appointment, I'll tell you this, my daughter ſhan't marry till—

Edw. Dear Sir!—

Flail. Till to-morrow morning; and if, by that time you can prove to me that you poſſeſs a freehold tenement, one article of live ſtock, or a ſingle acre of land within ſix miles of this houſe, you ſhall be the man yourſelf.

Edw. You know, ſir, it is impoſſible; you know I have neither houſe, land, nor means.

Flail. And are yet ſo mad as to expect I will match you with my daughter; ſirrah! ſirrah! before young folks accuſe fathers and grandfathers of cruelty, and hold 'em up to ridicule in ſtage plays and romances, they ſhou'd look at home, and think on the greater cruelty of expoſing an honeſt man's child to ſuffering and poverty for the ſake of their own ſelfiſh gratification. [*Exit.*

Edw. His arguments are not to be oppoſed, and I ſhou'd be a ſcoundrel were I to proceed.—What's to be done?—reſign her to a rival?—no!—A houſe and land before to-morrow!—Oh! had I time, I'd overcome all obſtacles, and raviſh from Fortune by induſtry and perſeverance, the minor gifts of wealth, as mere ſteps to the prize I aim at—but now 'tis impoſſible.

Re-enter KALENDAR.

Kal. What's impoſſible to a lover?—If he had order'd you on an errand to Abyſſinia, or bid you

fetch a glaſs of ſpring-water from the ſource of the Nile, you'd have his'd horſes, and been off directly, but when he only aſks what's done every day, —

Edw. Sir!

Kal. Why, I've heard all; and, from friendſhip for your poor old father, ſhould like to ſerve you, and chouſe old Sordid.—Bleſs my ſoul! has nobody got a little free-hold to diſpoſe of?

Edw. I thought you ſaw no difficulty?

Kal. None but what I can——You're ſure you can't buy one?

Edw. Shou'd people without money buy eſtates?

Kal. People without money have moſt occaſion for 'em.—Stay, I think I have it:—Old Flail has affronted me—ſpoken diſreſpectfully of my forefathers—abuſed my almanack—ſlighted my advice, and ridiculed my predictions; but I'll be even with him. You ſhall take him at his word, force him to give you his daughter's hand, and obtain his conſent againſt his inclination.

Edw. This is a paradox!

Kal. I deal in paradoxes.—Come home with me, and I'll make it as clear to you as the ſun in his meridian.

Edw. Remember, he has a boſom of flint!

Kal. Then do you have a heart of ſteel, and my brain ſhall be the tinderbox, to light a match he little dreams of.—Come, it wou'd be hard indeed, if I, who have made a model of the moon, added ſtars to the orrery, and furniſhed fine weather to the whole county, coudn't predict the end of an affair like this. I had a ſweetheart myſelf once, and for her ſake wou'd have conquer'd ten times your difficulties. Oh, thoſe were happy times, when I dreaded no ſtorms but in Love's Almanack, when I ſet down frowns for foul weather, ſmiles for ſunſhine, and ev'ry *billetdoux* for a red-letter-day. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE—KALENDAR'S *Study and Library.*

An Orrery, Teleſcopes, Electrical Apparatus, Chair, &c.

SPRIGGINS *and* JENNY *diſcovered.*

Jen. Lord, now, Mr. Spriggins, if any of the folks at our houſe knew I was here, at your maſter's, Mr. Kalendar's, what wou'd they ſay to it?

Sprig. Why, they'd ſay as you com'd a courting to me, or elſe as you wanted to have your fortin told by him.

Jen. I'm ſure I only came to aſk advice about poor young miſtreſs—ſhe'll be lock'd up, and fed upon bread and water, if ſhe don't marry the ſtrange young man that's expected.

Sprig. Well; and how's my maſter to help that?

Jen. Why, can't he caſt ſome of their nativities, and look through a *fig*-nifying-glaſs, and tell about ſtars and fiery dragons.

Sprig. A ſignifying-glaſs!—a horoſcope, you mean.—Lord help you!—Why, you be as ignorant as you be pretty.

Jen. Yes; I'm *very* ignorant.—Are theſe all his books?

Sprig. Yes; he do know what's o'clock all over the world; *ge-ho*-graphy be his hobby horſe; and, when he's once up, he rides like a witch on a broom-ſtaff!

Jen. Mercy on us! and what's that? *(pointing to the orrery.)*

Sprig. That's a horrary---that's Jupiter and his *ſet o'lights*---and Satan and Lucifer, and the reſt of the heavenly bodies.

Jen. I thought Venus was a heavenly body.

Sprig. Yes; and this ſhews all her motions; and this is a comet; and theſe ſuns be all moons.

Jen. (*going to the electrical machine.*) And what's this?---be this muſic?

Sprig. No; don't touch that; if you turn that handle round, you'll do miſchief---it be put there to

be ready againſt Mr. Roundabout, the gouty tax-gatherer, comes to *collectrified*.

Jen. Never mind---is the old gentleman coming up?

Sprig. No; but if you meddle with that infernal machine, you may bring the old gentleman up in good earneſt.

Jen. Mercy on us; and ſo theſe are your maſter's tools to tell fortunes with.

Sprig. No; this is the way to tell fortunes---give me your hand.

Jen. La! Mr. Spriggins!

Sprig. Let me ſee---aye, you'll be married to a tall---thin young man, about my age.

Jen. Indeed!

Sprig. Yes, you will marry a bachelor; and your firſt huſband will live to have two wives.

Jen. What---at one time!

Sprig. Oh, no.

Jen. No!—Why, then, I don't think you underſtand fortune-telling at all.—I have been told better; and I wou'd not die and leave the beſt huſband in England, if I cou'd help it.

Sprig. Then you ſhall marry me. I've forty pounds a-year, beſides wages; and, if maſter wou'd put us into a new public-houſe, by gemini, we'd ſet up the ſeven ſigns of the zodi-*ac*.

Jen. There's too many ſigns in the village already; the half-moon's never full, and there's nobody in the ſun from morning till night.

Sprig. Well; and, if ſo be as—*(Jenny lets fall a barometer, which breaks.)* there, you've broken one of the beſt weather-glaſſes—there'll be a fine ſtorm when maſter comes home—he'll be all over in a con-*ſtell*-ation.

Jen. 'Twas all along o'you: what did you talk ſuch nonſenſe to me for—about ſeven ſigns at one public-houſe.

KALENDAR (*within*).

Kal. What the devil are you all at there?

Jen. O dear! O dear! what shall I do?—I dare not face him—I shall be kill'd!

Sprig. Run in here; and I'll take the fault all on myself. (*puts her into a closet.*)

KALENDAR *enters, followed by* EDWARD.

Kal. Here's a chaos!—hey day!—who has done this?

Sprig. Not Jenny, sir—it were I, sir.—I were looking for the great bear, sir; and, when I saw you coming, I were so frightful o' your being angry, that I knock'd un over, sir.

Kal. Out of my sight, you plague of Egypt!

Sprig. Dear, dear, how will Jane get out of the closet! (*aside, and Exit.*)

Kal. Every thing in confusion—not a planet in its orbit—the globe upset—the glass fallen—and I shall be ruined.—There, I must put my stars out of their reach. (*stands in a chair, and puts the orrery on a high shelf.*) I think nobody will get at that again.

Edw. Unless they stand in that high chair as you did.

Kal. I'll put that in its place too. (*puts the chair in a recess, behind a curtain, and fixes a chain to it, from the electrical machine.*) There, that chair is charged with electric fluid; and, if any one touches that, a single turn of this handle will tickle their tobies.—John Spriggins!

Enter SPRIGGINS.

Sprig. I be here, sir.

Kal. Run to O'Gimlet, the carpenter, and bid him make haste where I told him, and do you go and help him.

Sprig. Yes, sir.

Kal. And John!—

Sprig. (*re-entering.*) Yes, sir.

Kal. Take Flouriſh, the painter, in your hand, and bid 'em both make haſte.

Sprig. Yes, ſir.---Dear, dear, how will Jane get out of the cloſet. [*Exit.*

Kal. And Spriggins!-----

Re-enter SPRIGGINS.

You don't know of any body that has a little freehold to part with?

Sprig. Vreehold! no, ſir! I have forty pounds a year, beſides wages; but ——

Kal. Don't ſtand chattering there. [*Exit* SPRIGGINS. Now, a'n't you all impatience to know what I'm about? (*to* EDWARD.)

Edw. Rather anxious, I confeſs.

Kal. You obſerved, that, in our tranſit hither, I touch'd at the carpenter's, bricklayer's, and painter's.

Edw. I don't ſee how that relates to me.

Kal. No!—Did you never hear of my book upon foreſt charters, and rights of common? (*reaches a folio.*)

Edw. No, ſir; and, at a time like this, I had rather be excuſed attacking ſo large a volume.

Kal. Large! Heaven forbid a Britiſh public ſhould ever countenance any *abridgment* of their *common rights!* No, no; here's the paſſage ſhall explain this myſtery.

Edw. It isn't long, I hope, ſir?

Kal. Silence! (*reads.*) "By virtue of one of our foreſt charters, if a man do build a dwelling upon common land, from ſun-ſet to ſun-riſe, and encloſe a piece of ground, wherein there ſhall be a tree growing, a beaſt feeding, a fire kindled, a chimney ſmoking, and proviſion in the pot, ſuch dwelling ſhall be freely held by the builder, any thing herein to the contrary, nevertheleſs notwithſtanding."

Edw. But how—

Kal. Don't interrupt me: I've bargain'd for the

wooden billiard-room at the Crown. We'll carry it to the foreſt, build a chimney at one end of it, plant a tree from my garden, and to-morrow ſhall make a freeholder of you.

Edw. Sir, your zeal for my ſervice makes you forget, that, when the *means* are unworthy of the *end*, ——

Kal. That we ought to ſtop in the middle?—Pſha! —there are ſpots in the ſun; and when we can't ſnow white, we muſt ſnow brown.—Look at that team: (*takes him to a window.*) there go three parts of your manſion, upon four wheels.—Your ſtar is in its altitude. I've hired Charles's wain to carry your *houſe* and *ſtet fortuna domûs*.

Edw. Yet, ere we go further, ——

Kal. We muſt buy a cow and a kitchen range.

Edw. But, when Mr. Flail comes to know —

Kal. That you've got a good fire and a piece of beef, he'll give you ſomething to make the pot boil.

Edw. Your plan is romantic.---

Kal. If it was not, I'd have nothing to do with it: the *times* are romantic, and I always accord with the *ſeaſons*, from one year's end to another.

Edw. Always?

Kal. Yes: I bring in the new year, and eat twelfth-cake in *January*; write valentines in *February*--*March*, in proceſſion with St. David, and dine with the ſons of St. Patrick; make fools in *April*; dance with the chimney-ſweepers in *May*; drink the king's health in *June*; and take the *longeſt day* to pay my bills in. Jump into the ocean in *July*; cut my corn in *Auguſt*; go *hopping* and *popping* in *September*; brew in *October*; chair Guy Faux and my lord-mayor in *November*; while, in *December*, roaſt beef, plumb pudding, old port, blindman's buff, romps, riddles, and kiſſing the pretty girls under the miſletoe, wind up our Chriſtmas gambols, and ſet us all agog to begin the year again.

[*Exeunt.*

End of the Second Act.

ACT II.

SCENE---*An Apartment at 'Squire Flail's.*

Enter ROBERT *and* LUCKLESS.

ROBERT.

WHO, Sir ſhall I ſay wants Maſter?

Luck. Mr. Laurence Luckleſs from London.

Rob. Yes, Sir; Mr. Lucky Laurence, from---from where did you ſay, Sir?

Luck. (*gives him a newſpaper.*) Here, that will do inſtead of a card; ſay it's the gentleman deſcribed in that paper.

Rob. Gentleman! I *muſt tell* him that, or he won't find it out, I fear.. (*aſide.*) [*Exit.*

Luck. With my uſual good fortune; I loſt my friend Edward as ſoon as I found him; forgot what he told me about that confounded finger-poſt, and have come ſome miles out of my way; I believe what one finds on the highway is one's own, and I'm not a little obliged to the owner of this coat for leaving it where he did; it hides my ſhabby habiliments, and gives me ſo much the air of a horſe-dealer, that I look quite like a man of faſhion in it.

Enter FLAIL (*with a newſpaper.*)

Flail. Servant, Sir; a well looking lad—(*aſide.*) glad to ſee you, and as you are brought here by this promiſe, (*pointing to the newſpaper*) I dare ſay you're not ſorry to ſee me.

Luck. Nor yet a little impatient to *hear* you, Sir, on the *ſubject* of that promiſe.

Flail. I'll ſatisfy you directly; ſit down and tell your hiſtory.

Luck. Nay, ſir; it is I who came to liſten.

Flail. Indeed! and how am I to know whether you are the perſon here meant?

Luck. Sir, I am the ſon of a mother who died

ſoon after I was born—of a father who never own'd me—and have been left to a guardian, who, between friends, is one of the greateſt——

Flail. Huſh! you don't know who you are abuſing.

Luck. I was ſo pointed at by village boys as the child of nobody, that I quitted the place of my birth, was overtaken by my guardian, whom I have never ſeen ſince, and ſent to a cheap ſchool at a great diſtance.

Flail. So far, ſo good:

Luck. Perhaps not; the ſchoolmaſter was extravagantly fond of boxing and rural ſports, and paid me ſo much attention that I was quickly grounded in the elements of Walton's Angler—cou'd knock down any boy in the firſt form—and never underwent even the correction of a fiſhing rod.

Filal. Nay, if you run away from your ſtory—

Luck. It will be exactly what I did from the ſchool; where, as ſoon as I cou'd beat the maſter at his own leſſons, he beat me in return; I fled to the college, where Mr. Edward Frankland, a former playfellow, was at his ſtudies; and my guardian forgave me, becauſe the ſchoolmaſter dare not demand his money, and becauſe I got the reſt of my education for nothing.

Flail. With Edward Frankland?

Luck. As an humble companion, we exchanged our mutual accompliſhments; and, though I may not be as good a claſſic as he wiſh'd to make me, yet it is my pride to ſay, that I taught him to tickle a trout in a ſtream, or *put* in a *Belcher* at a boxing match, with any man in England.

Flail. You next went 'prentice?

Luck. To one who deteſted latin, and hated boxing, ſo I ran away again from the prejudice of education, and have been left to my own reſources, 'till your public invitation procured me the honour of this private audience.

Flail. Your ſtory proves you the right perſon---now, hear mine.

Luck. I am quite ſatisfied of your idenity, and had rather be told what relates to myſelf.

Flail. Liſten, Sir; a careful middle-aged man, who had been uncommonly ſevere on the faults of others, committed one himſelf.

Luck. That I haven't the leaſt doubt of.

Flail. The partner of his folly died, and left a ſon; the father fearing to offend a patron on whom he then depended, paſs'd for the guardian of this boy, whom he brought up to buſtle with the world, the patron is dead—the father is rich—and you—*you* are his ſon and heir.

Luck. His ſon?—ſon to old Sordid!

Flail. You're not aſham'd of a rich father?

Luck. Aſham'd! no, but you're not joking, are you?

Flail. Joking!

Luck. I have heard him ſo ſpoken of, that—that as he is my father I muſt forget it. I have not been uſed to the name of father—but I know my duty—and—I ſhall never be able to thraſh half the people, that I've heard abuſe him.

Flail. Well, but he has offer'd you as my ſon-in-law.

Luck. I heard that before I knew who I was.

Flail. And, as you have given a true account of yourſelf, perhaps I don't like you the worſe for it.

Luck. But, as to being your ſon-in-law, ſir, I have a *friend* who muſt be conſulted.

Flail. Aye; you mean Edward, I ſuppoſe.

Luck. He wou'd furniſh a reaſon againſt it: but I have another---my wife might poſſibly have ſome objection.

Flail. Married!

Luck. Yes; I can't ſay ſhe's much of a wife, being hardly higher than your cane, but her's is an engagement I never intend to run away from.

Flail. And where is she?

Luck. Ten miles off only---at a little inn, where she waits the intelligence my visit seem'd to promise.

Flail. And what do you mean to do?

Luck Why, the best thing I can do will be to---What do you think?

Flail. Umph!---my advice will be soon given.---Robert---(*Enter* ROBERT.)---Saddle my daughter's horse and mine.---(*Exit* ROBERT.)---You shall fetch your wife, and meet your father.---You'll eat and drink first?

Luck. I have little appetite.

Flail. Why?

Luck. Because I have fasted nearly the whole day; and a pleasant change is so new to me, that tho' I have always kept my spirits when in trouble, they seem to think now I have no further occasion for 'em.

Flail. Oh! well; a good glass of wine will bring you up again.

Luck. Perhaps it may----I thought good luck was coming when I found this coat, and now I have found this father of mine.

Flail. Speak of him with respect.---No son shall forget his duty in my presence.

Luck. Aye, sir, but when a parent has taken so little pains to make other folks speak well of him,---

Flail. He has the more need to be defended by his children. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE—KALENDAR'S *Study, as before.*

JENNY, (*peeping from the Closet.*)

Jen. It's mortal cruel of John Spriggins to let me stay here so long.—Nobody seems to be in the way; so, I'll go, without even saying good bye to him.—I'll be hang'd, if here isn't Mrs. Prudence, old master's cousin.—If she catches me here, it will be as much as my place is worth.—I'll be bound she comes to find me out.—What a mean thing it is for people

to be ſo curious.—I'll hide again, and try if I can't overhear what ſhe wants. (*returns into the cloſet.*)

Enter MRS. PRUE.

Mrs. Pru. Why, the houſe is quite deſerted.—I'm ſure I traced that huſſey Jane to the door; and, whether ſhe comes to ſee John Spriggins, or to conſult Mr. Kalendar, I'm determin'd to diſcover.—I hope it's John; for, if ſhe dare have any deſign on his maſter—it's a ſhame for young women to be trying to decoy men who,—bleſs me, here's Mr. K. and I don't think I ever look'd ſo ſhockingly in all my life. (*runs to a glaſs, and adjuſts herſelf.*)

Enter KALENDAR.

Kal. The work goes bravely forward—bricklayer, carpenter, painter, glazier, and gardener, all buſy; and I'll bet Herſchell's teleſcope to an opera-glaſs that our plan will be accompliſh'd within time.—Ah, Mrs. Prue, this is an honour.

Mrs. Pru. (*ſimpering.*) Do you really think ſo ſir?

Kal. Any particular commands—came home in a hurry to electrify the gouty tax-gatherer, and muſt be off again directly.

Mrs. Pru. I ſhan't detain you, ſir.—I neither want my fortune told, nor my nativity caſt.

Kal. Cou'dn't do that if you did.—Ladies never tell their age, you know.

Mrs. Pru. You have been taken in then? (*Jenny peeps out, Mrs. P. ſees her.*)

Kal. Oh, yes; the dear deceivers have play'd me a thouſand tricks.

Mrs. Pru. (*eying the cloſet.*) Indeed! I thought as much.

Kal. Yes: there was your neighbour, Mrs. Wizenface, came here t'other day.

Mrs. Pru. (*ſtill watching the cloſet.*) An impudent huſſey!

Kal. No, not impudent, but as fine as a rainbow,

and as crooked, into the bargin:---She gave me a wrong age, and I propheſied all the good things that have ſince happened to her grand-daughter.

Mrs. Pru. It's a great ſhame.

Kal. But what can I do?---I don't know how to diſpoſe of half the females who come to me.

Mrs. Pru. No!---have you no convenient room, Mr. K. you cou'd contrive to put a lady into?

Kal. Oh, Mrs. Prudence; fie for ſhame! why, you wou'dn't think of ſuch a thing, wou'd you?

Mrs. Pru. (*bridling.*) Me! no, ſir; but there are ſome whom you might lock up, with their own conſent too.

Kal. I keep no key for any ſuch purpoſe: my cloſets are all full of curioſities of every age; and I wou'dn't put a woman among 'em for the world.

Mrs. Pru. (*ſignificantly.*) Is there no curioſity in *that* cloſet?

Kal. A great many:—it contains all the rarities of the ſeventeenth century! from the time cauliflowers were firſt planted in England, trunk-hoſe gave way to modern inexpreſſibles, judges began to wear wigs, and Peter the Great went 'prentice to a ſhip-carpenter.

Mrs. Pru. And, pray, when were inviſible girls invented?

Kal. In the reign of Queen Elizabeth, you cou'd only ſee a lady from fore-head to the chin; but now, nothing's inviſible but the petticoats.

Mrs. Pru. Well, ſir, you may talk as you pleaſe; but I ſay ——

Enter a Boy.

Boy. Sir, maſter can't get out of his gouty chair; and wants to ſpeak to you at the door.

Kal. That's lucky; I ſhall the ſooner get back to my job in the foreſt. (*aſide*) Excuſe me, Mrs. Prue. Go along, Dickey. (*exit Boy.*) I'll follow.

Mrs. Pru. But, ſir, I muſt ſay one word.

Kal. I'll be back, directly, but can't ſtop long; in the mean time, perhaps, you may take a peep at the planets; or, if you'd like to ſee my new conductor, you may ſtep up to the top of the houſe, and treat yourſelf with a flaſh of lightning: and, when I'm leſs buſy, I'll ſhew you ev'ry natural curioſity in my whole collection. [*Exit* KALENDAR.

Mrs. Pru. I'll make bold to ſee one of 'em now.—No, no, I'll take no peep at the planets—my diſcoveries ſhall be of more conſequence.—But, ſtop—the huſſey will deny ſhe came to him, though it's plain enough why he wanted me out of the way:—he ſaid he'd return—ſo, I'll juſt hide behind this curtain.—When he thinks me abſent, miſs will be let out;—but I'll ſpoil their *tete-a-tete*, I warrant. (*goes into the receſs, where* KALENDAR *had put his electrical chair.*

Re-enter KALENDAR.

Kal. So!—one plague's got rid of;—and now to ſend off the other.—Eh! gone!—I didn't ſee her come out; but I ſuppoſe ſhe ſlipt by, when I was talking to the old gentleman.

Jen. (*who has come out during his ſpeech.*) Which way did ſhe go, ſir?

Kal. Mercy on us! which way did you come?

Jen. Dear, dear, ſir, I be ſo frightened.—I came, ſir, by way of *in*-ſulting your knowledge about poor young miſſus; and, when the old woman catch'd I in the cupboard there, I—dear—dear—I be ſo frighten'd—

Kal. In the cupboard!—Oh!—why, then, the old Jezebel meant ſomething.—I cou'dn't think what ſhe was at, ogling me with her northern lights.—Well, ſit down, Jenny, I can ſpare a moment to talk to you.—Sit down, and recover yourſelf. You're

a good girl; and I ſhould be happy to give you ſome little proof of my regard.

Mrs. Pru. (*from the receſs.*) Oh! oh! (*in a half ſuppreſſed voice.*)

Jen. What's that!—bleſs me, I be ſo frighten'd.

Kal. Something wrong in my machinery.—Stay, as old Gouty won't be electrified to-day, I may as well let off this machine. It's full charged, and may do miſchief elſe. (*goes to the machine.*)

Jen. Oh, dear, ſir, don't ye go to touch that; for John Spriggins do tell I it will raiſe the devil.

Kal. We'll ſoon ſee that—

Jen. Do let I get out of the way then. (*runs to the other ſide.*)

Kal. There, you fooliſh girl (*turns the handle*, Mrs. PRUE *ſcreams and jumps out of the receſs.* JENNY *falls on her knees.* KALENDAR *is aſtoniſhed.*)

Jen. I never was ſo frighten'd in all my life.

Mrs. Pru. I never was ſo ſhock'd in all my life.

Kal. I dare ſay not.---Egad I muſt have tickled her.

Mrs. Pru. You---tickle me! Sir, I am ſo angry, ſo choaked with paſſion- -

Kal. That you ſeem quite electrified.

Jen. Indeed, dear madam---I---

Mrs. Pru. Out of my ſight, you huſſey.---

Jen. Oh I wiſh he'd ſtuff her into one of his great telegraphs. [*Exit.*

Mrs. Pru. This is the gouty tax-gatherer you came to, ſir.

Kal. No, it isn't.

Mrs. Pru. What buſineſs had ſhe in that cloſet?

Kal. To ſee what you were doing in that corner.

Mrs. Pru. But my couſin ſhall know, and ſhe ſhall leave the houſe directly.

Kal. You're welcome to do the ſame; and next time you come here to make experiments, take care you don't get another curtain lecture.

Mrs. Pru. Sir, if you had a ſingle ſpark of good breeding—

Kal. If I had, I'd recommend him to you directly, ---but you've exhauſted all my ſparks, and I wiſh you much benefit from the operation.

Mrs. Pru. I'll ſee the young huſſey puniſh'd, that I will. [*Exit.*

Kal. And I'll ſee the old man ſafe out of the houſe. Egad, if every time I turn this handle, it produces ſuch a ſudden ſquall as it did juſt now, it will be unſafe to touch it: What between the old woman in the receſs, and the young one in the cloſet, I was completely galviniſed! [*Exit.*

SCENE—*The entrance of a ruſtick Inn.*

Enter LAURA LUCKLESS, *from the Houſe.*

Lau. No, I can ſee nothing of him.—I wiſh I had gone with him,—what a misfortune it is to have a huſband that's always unlucky.—I dare ſay this fine promiſe in the newſpapers, was only a trick, and he'll come back ſo croſs! Heigho! what a hurry I was once in to get married, and now we have ſo many troubles, vexations and quarrels!—O lud! O lud! Marriage without money isn't half ſo pleaſant as the days of courtſhip.

SONG—LAURA—(*adapted to an old Air.*)

The hawthorn was blowing, young flow'rets were gay,
Primroſes were growing, birds ſung on each ſpray,
But ſweeter ſung my true love, far ſweeter to my ear,
I'm waiting here for you, love, 'tis the ſpring time of year.

II.

In ſummer I yielded, my love's bride to be made,
But as leaves droop in autumn, our joys too will fade,
For love without riches is chill'd by the froſt,
And 'ere winter, alas! all my pleaſures were loſt.

Enter SORDID.

Sord. Bleſs my heart! Bleſs my heart! Five miles! Why I do think I've travell'd fifteen, and this is the firſt houſe I've met with;—I can't have much farther to go. Oh! there's a female,—young woman!

Lau. Young woman!

Sord. Well then, *Miſs*.

Lau. Sir, I'm married.

Sord. Why then, *Madam*, do tell me how far it is to Harveſt Hall.

Lau. It's ten miles, ſir,—and long ones too, if I may meaſure by the abſence of my huſband.

Sord. Ten miles! it was only five, three hours ago.

Lau. Which way did you come, ſir?

Sord. I came by the poſt.

Lau. Then perhaps you've been mis-ſent, by a wrong direction.

Sord. Mis-ſent! So I've walk'd off my legs, broke my appointment with old Flail; riſk'd ſome of my property; loſt the reſt,—and here comes the very man that robb'd me of it.

Lau. Oh there he is!—My dear, dear fellow—I'll fly to meet him—I'm ſure he's been lucky, for he's got a new coat already. [*Exit.*

Sord. Oh ho! She's a confederate—I'll get aſſiſtance from the houſe, recover my loſs, get forty pounds for apprehending a highwayman, and that huſſey's dear fellow ſhall be hang'd. [*Exit into the houſe.*

Enter LUCKLESS *and* LAURA.

Luck. to Robert. Give the horſes a feed, my lad, and we'll be back to your maſter's directly. Well! my dear little Laura!

Lau. Well, Laurence—do tell me all.

Luck. Directly, I gueſs your impatience, and—did they give you any dinner in this devil of a dog-hole?

Lau. If they had, I cou'dn't have eat it for anxiety.—Well, you went to the Hall, and found—

Luck. An old friend, a new coat, and a father!

Lau. A father!

Luck. Aye, and a rich one too, you little rogue—

Lau. A rich one! Well, I don't know how it was, but it always wou'd run in my head, that you muſt have had a father, though you never found him out.

SORDID *enters from the Houſe with Landlord,* BLACK BOB, *and Countrymen, ſmoking.*

Luck. But I've found him out now, and a curious one he is too. When I aſk his bleſſing, I dare ſay the firſt thing he'll ſay, will be——

Sord. (*coming forward.*) Knock him down. That's the fellow that robb'd me.—(*they ſeize Luckleſs.*)

Black Bob. (*aſide.*) That's my coat, ſure enough—

Luck. Scoundrels! I never ſaw that man in my life.

Lau. My huſband accuſed of robbery!

Sord. Search him—I'll ſwear to my money, it's all mark'd.

Black Bob. (*comes forward.*) Mark'd—why any body may mark money; may be you'll ſwear to that, ——(*ſhews a piece of gold.*)

Sord. That—why, I will ſwear that he,—no,—that—that piece of gold——

Land. That old gentleman's crazy!

Sord. Crazy?—Doh't let him go—for I'll ſwear to the man by the coat—

Luck. The coat! Sir, I pick'd this coat up on the highway.

Sord I dare ſay you did.

Luck. And when I found this hanging on a poſt—

Sord You little thought of being hang'd yourſelf, —bring him along.

Lau. Pray don't—he's innocent.

Black Bob. Mayhap he is.—A man is not to be found guilty by outſide appearance. I knows ſomewhat of law.—What's a coat?—a coat isn't a man. —There, I'll put it on; and what of that?

Sord. Why, then, if it was the laſt word I had to ſay, I'd ſwear that you are the man that did rob me.

Landlord and Countrymen. Oh, ſhame! ſhame!

Lau. Shame, indeed!—that wicked old man will ſwear any thing.

Luck. Harkye, ſir.

Sord. Seize him, I charge you.

Black Bob. Would you like to try the coat, Miſs; perhaps, he'll ſay 'twas *you.*

Sord. He robb'd me cloſe by a finger-poſt, in the foreſt where four roads meet.

Countryman. Then the finger-poſt muſt have grown there ſince morning.—That old fellow tells nothing but flams.

Luck. To be call'd a thief!—I inſiſt on carrying him to Mr. Flail's.

Sord. The place I'm going to—only mind you *do* carry me—for I'll not walk another ſtep—and, as we go, I'll ſhew you the very ſpot where I was robb'd—and take my money out of the bank, by the roadſide. (*apart.*)

Luck. Are the horſes ready?

Enter ROBERT.

Rob. All ready, ſir.

Black Bob. Well, then, as nobody ſeems to own this coat, perhaps, I have as much right to it as another.

Sord. Stop, ſir.—No running away. (*ſeizes him.*)

Luck. Aye! I inſiſt on our all going, and having this all clear'd up.

Sord. I'm in cuſtody---mind that---and I'll bring a ſwinging action for falſe impriſonment.

Luck. Come, then, we ſhall have juſtice at the hall; and then I ſhall have an action againſt you for charging Laurence Luckleſs with felony.

Sord. Who—What, are you—

Luck. Don't talk to me, ſir—you've ſaid too much already.

Sord. But, my dear boy—my——

Luck. Put him on the 'ſquire's horſe.—Come, Laura. [*Exeunt* LUCKLESS *and* LAURA.

Sord. Gentlemen!---only hear me—call him back; for I do believe that unnatural bird, that ungracious varlet, is neither more nor leſs than my own ſon!

Countryman. Oh, dear, Oh, dear—he be quite mad—bring him along. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE—*The croſs Roads and Finger Poſt, with the addition of a neat wooden Houſe, with a Brick Chimney, a Lamb grazing within the Pales that ſurround it.*

When the Scene is diſcovered, a great knocking is heard, as if within the Houſe—a Bricklayer is fixing the Chimney-Pot—SPRIGGINS, *on a Ladder, is nailing a Cherry-Tree againſt one ſide of the Building*—FLOURISH *is painting the Pales*—O'GIMLET *is hanging a little Gate to them—and* KALENDAR *is looking out of a Window.*

Kal. Well done, boys; work away outside, whilie we finish within, and I'll be with you directly. (*retires from the window.*)

O'Gim. I say, Mr. Flourish.

Flou. Well, friend.

O'Gim. Don't be twiddling there about nothing; but bring one of your fists here with a pound brush in it.

Flou. I will not come at thy bidding; nor will I cease twiddling until I see occasion.

O'Gim. O, mighty well!—the thing's all done to your hands; and, if you won't finish it, it's no fault of mine.

Sprig. (*coming down.*) Never saw a better bit of gardener's work since I was born.

Flou. Yea; the dwelling is most neatly colour'd.

O'Gim. It's the prettiest timber'd edifice within five miles, let who will be next door to it.

Sprig. Oh, talk of beauty, my tree against your house, for what you like.

Flou. Thy tree has spoil'd my paint, which will also spoil thy planting.

Enter KALENDAR *from House,* (*Smoke rises from the Chimney.*)

Kal. There! all ready, inside and out; old Margery's blowing the fire; Edward's gone to ask for his wife; and there only wants a sun-dial on the door-post, a weather-glass against the wainscoat, and an almanack behind the door to complete the furniture.

Enter Bricklayer.

Brick. Neat bit of brick work, that there chimbley,—my master—devilish well—it smokes,—It's a pity the walls an't brick too.

Kal. No pity at all:—an Engliſh freeholder's houſe is his caſtle, and wooden walls are a deviliſh good protection—eh!—why, that poſt points wrong.

O'Gim. That's impoſſible, when it points to every road in the place—it's painted wrong, honey.

Flou. The fault is in the top, which moveth.

O'Gim. Not at all; I knock'd a great nail in it awhile ago, to keep it where it is.

Kal. Well, away with you; drink long life to the new landlord, for here he comes, huzza! (*They ſhout as* EDWARD *enters with* FLAIL—*the Quaker ſhouts in a formal manner—the workmen go off.*

Flail. Hey-day! whoſe dwelling's this, I wonder? Is this what you mean to ſay is your's?

Kal. All his;—houſe, goods, chattels, and live ſtock—cattle grazing—tree growing, and chimney ſmoking——

Sprig. And if your worſhip pleaſes to come in, you ſhall ſee me lay t' cloth. (*Exit into the houſe.*

Edw. You ſee, Sir, I have not deceived you—our common friend has enabled me to claim your promiſe.

Flail. And do you mean to claim it on ſuch grounds?

Kal. Such grounds wou'd make a beautiful figure in an auctioneer's catalogue; four proſpects at one view—ſpacious encloſure—one head of live lands, and a garden full of wall fruit; and do you think he means to have all this trouble and expence for nothing?

Edw. At leaſt, Sir, I hope you will not give Mary to my rival?

Flail. Why, no; I won't for two reaſons; in the firſt place, he's married already; in the next, if you give proof of continuing ſo induſtrious, I——

Kal. Why, who the deuce have we here, I wonder?

Enter SORDID *and* COUNTRYMAN,—*he runs to* FLAIL, *and ſtares about him while he ſhakes hands.*

Sor. My dear old friend—*you'll* hear me ſpeak, I'm ſure—I've been ſo uſed, that——why this can't be the place where I hid my money (*aſide.*)

Flail. I don't wonder at your gazing about—I can hardly believe my own eyes.

Kal. (*to Edward*) There's Mary, run and meet her. [*Exit* EDWARD.

Enter LUCKLESS *and* LAURA.

Luck. (*to Flail*) Ah, Sir! we've met half-way;—here is the lady of whom I told you—and there is a crazy old man who accuſes me of robbing him.—(*pointing to* SORDID, *who is ſearching and peeping about for his money.*)

Flail. Shall I never teach youth to be reſpectful; that crazy old man is your father.

Luck. Found at laſt, and in this place too?

Sor. Found! is it found? Where is it? give it me directly.

Flail. Why that's your ſon, and that's his wife.

Kal. And that ſeems to be the long and the ſhort of it.

Sor. I ſaid it was my ſon—but married! do come this way? (*Flail, Sordid, Luckleſs, and Laura go up the ſtage.*)

Enter SPRIGGINS, *with a dirty bundle from the houſe.*

Sprig. (*to Kalendar*) Here be a dirty bundle in a black handkerchief, kicking about among the rubbiſh—it do chink as tho' 'twere money.

Sor. Give it me—it's mine—it's—

Kal. (*ſnatching it*) No, it's not your's; whatever is found in that houſe, belongs to its owner. Here, Edward. (EDWARD *re-enters with* MARY.) You're lord of the manor; perhaps this is a prize for you. (*Gives him the bundle—Mary goes to her father—Jenny enters and runs to Spriggins, who in dumb ſhew, points out the new houſe, &c.*)

Sor. A prize indeed! 'tis mine—'tis money, mortgages, and, above all, there are the writings and titles of his father's eſtate.

Kal. And where have the title deeds of a deceaſed father, a better right to be than in the hands of his ſon? They were found under his roof.

Sor. They were under no roof—when I buried them. (*aſide.*)

Luck. Father ſeems to have brought a pretty houſe over his head.

Edw. Take your money, Sir; theſe papers muſt be examined elſewhere.

Flail. So, ſo; he'll get his eſtate back. (*aſide.*) Why, Mary, what do you hang on me for? I know you'd rather take *his* arm by half; go.

Mary. I obey you Sir, with pleaſure.

Flail. To be ſure—ſee how I bring up my children.

Kal. Ah! You always ſaid ſhe was a *good* girl.

Sprig. (*to Jenny.*) And what be you hanging upon *I* for?

Jenny. I hanging on *you*; why I'll be whipt if he hasn't been a ſweet-hearting o' me as hard as ever he cou'd ever ſince I came into the place.

Kal. Come, let's into our new dwelling, and try to compromise.

Sor. But what's to be done with the man who robb'd me?

Flail. Done with him! take him to the village, and lock him up. I'll make him leave off his roguish habits.

Luck. And when he does leave off his habits, don't let it be where I may pick 'em up again.

Edw. Among these papers is one of no pecuniary worth, but to me a prize above them all.

Sor. You may keep that—it's of no use but to the owner. *(aside.)*

Edw. It contains the blessing and forgiveness of my father; and cou'd you have withheld——

Kal. No; I hope nobody here would wish to withhold forgiveness, and tho' our edifice be formed of slight materials, yet, as it is only intended for a *summer* house, we entreat our Lords and Ladies of the Manor to allow it Right of Common.

THE END.

EPILOGUE.

EPILOGUE.

WRITTEN BY GEORGE COLMAN, ESQ.

CHARACTERS.

Kalendar . . . . Mr. Reinhardt.
Flourish . . . . Mr. Leeson.
Spriggins . . . . Mr. Matthews.
Jenny . . . . Mrs. Gibbs.

Enter KALENDAR (*reading an almanack.*)

Kal. Almanack fays, this day—aye thus it goes;
" Sev'nth of July—Thomas a'Becket—Toes."
" The weather overcaft."—That founds but queer;
I hope to find no *cloudy* faces here!
What next?—Oh! to *this market*, no diſmay;—
" Fine weather now for getting up the Hay."
Box-keeper, *here*, makes hay, when in he cramms
Arms, ſhoulders, ancles, hips, knees, legs, and hams
But when he ſtuffs you in, all ſnug and warm,
O! Vox Stellarum!—who can then inform
Whether 'twill turn to *ſun-ſhine* or a *ſtorm?*
Of this night's cauſe who ſhall be undertaker?
Our poet *trembles*—

Enter FLOURISH.

Flou. ——————He hath ſent a *quaker.*
Kal. What is it you predict about our play
Think you 'twill proſper?
Flou. ——————Peradventure, yea.

Kal. Sometimes they clap, and that betokens bliſs.
Flou. Sometimes the ſpirit moveth, and they hiſs.
Kal. Have you no friends above there?——(*Pointing to the gallery.*)
Flou. ——————Thou doſt ſcoff.
Kal. Why ſo?
Flou. Thou know'ſt they call out there, "*Hats off.*"

Enter SPRIGGINS *and* JENNY.

Kal. Spriggins! my man! you're here, I'll hold a guinea,
To ſerve the Play——
Sprig. ——————I'ſe been, and married Jenny.
Jenny. Beneath which ſign, Sir, is my huſband born?
Kal. Like many huſbands—under *Capricorn.*
Sprig. Under what ſign, then, do the ſky make *her* go?
Kal. The *Crab.*
Sprig. ——There, Jane; I know'd it wasn't *Virgo.* I ſaid ſo.——
Jenny. Hold your prate, then, fooliſh—do;—
Your Meaſter's wife, and know'd it afore you.
Kal. Now for the bard:—Athwart his teleſcope,
May no malignant planet damp his hope!
May no eclipſes make his proſpect black!
Sprig. Nor no bad ſign in all his *Zody-wack.*
Kal. With mirth, may eyes, like ſtars be twinkling merrily!
Friend Flouriſh, don't you join in this?
Flou. Yea verily.
Sprig. I wiſh him right good luck, now, by my figgins!
Jenny. And happy as a bride, like Jenny Spriggins.
Kal. Come then—(*to the Audience*)—You, *Libra*, or the *Balance*, hold;
Applaud him, and he'll feel like *Leo* bold;
If you condemn—for Fortune is precarious—
His eyes muſt then be govern'd by *Aquarius.*

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